

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A guide mechanism for a curtain airbag for guiding a longitudinal end of the curtain airbag, the curtain airbag configured to be able to deploy downward along a side of an interior of a vehicle, the guide mechanism comprising:

a guide member for the curtain airbag, configured to be vertically mounted to a pillar of the vehicle and configured to guide the airbag over a length of the guide member; and

a pillar garnish configured to be mounted to the pillar and to cover the guide member, wherein the guide member and pillar garnish are configured to be mounted to the pillar so that a shortest distance between the guide member along said length and an interior surface of the pillar is less than or equal to a shortest distance between a side of the pillar garnish and said interior surface of the pillar.

2. A guide mechanism for a curtain airbag according to claim 1, wherein said length is an approximate distance from an upper end to a lower end of the guide member.

3. A guide mechanism for a curtain airbag according to claim 1,

wherein the guide member is a guide rod, and

wherein the guide rod and pillar garnish are configured to be mounted to the pillar so that a shortest distance between the interior surface of the pillar and a line substantially parallel to the interior surface of the pillar and passing through a center of the guide rod along said length is less than or equal to a shortest distance between the interior surface of the pillar and a line substantially parallel to the interior surface of the pillar and passing through an edge of the pillar garnish that is on a side toward the curtain airbag.

4. A guide mechanism for a curtain airbag according to claim 3, wherein the guide rod and pillar garnish are configured to be mounted to the pillar so that a shortest distance between the interior surface of the pillar and any line substantially parallel to the interior surface of the pillar and passing through a center of the guide rod along said length is less than or equal to a shortest distance between the interior surface of the pillar and said line substantially parallel to the interior surface of the pillar and passing through said edge of the pillar garnish.

5. A guide mechanism for a curtain airbag according to claim 3, wherein said length is substantially equal to a vertical width of a window opening adjacent to the pillar.

6. A guide mechanism for a curtain airbag according to claim 5, wherein the guide rod is substantially straight.

7. A guide mechanism for a curtain airbag for guiding a longitudinal end of the curtain airbag, the curtain airbag configured to be able to deploy downward along a side of an interior of a vehicle, the guide mechanism comprising:

a guide member for the curtain airbag, configured to be vertically mounted to a pillar of the vehicle and configured to guide said longitudinal end of the airbag over the guide member during deployment of the airbag; and

a pillar garnish having edges and configured to be mounted to the pillar and to cover the guide member;

wherein the guide member and pillar garnish are configured to be mounted to the pillar so that said longitudinal end of the airbag is movable along the guide member without being bent by any of said edges of the pillar garnish and an interior surface of the pillar during at least a portion of the deployment of the airbag.

8. A guide mechanism for a curtain airbag according to claim 7, wherein the guide member and pillar garnish are configured to be mounted to the pillar so that said longitudinal end of the airbag is movable along the guide member without being bent by any of said edges of the pillar garnish and an interior surface of the pillar throughout the deployment of the airbag.

9. A guide mechanism for a curtain airbag according to claim 7, wherein the guide member is a guide rod.

10. A guide mechanism for a curtain airbag according to claim 8, wherein the guide rod is configured to be mounted to the pillar at an upper end and a lower end of the guide rod, and

wherein a distance between the upper end and the lower end is substantially equal to a vertical width of a window opening adjacent to the pillar.

11. A guide mechanism for a curtain airbag according to claim 9, wherein the guide rod is substantially straight.

12. A curtain airbag system, comprising:

- a pillar configured to connect a main body of an automobile to a roof of the automobile;
- a curtain airbag configured to connect to the automobile and configured to deploy downward along an interior side of the automobile;
- a guide member connected to the pillar and configured to guide a longitudinal end of the airbag over the guide member during deployment of the airbag; and
- a pillar garnish connected to the pillar and configured to cover the guide member, the pillar garnish having an edge on a side toward the curtain airbag,

wherein the curtain airbag is slideably connected to the guide member over a length of the guide member, and

wherein a shortest distance between an interior surface of the pillar and a line passing through a center of the guide member along said length and substantially parallel to the interior surface of the pillar is less than or equal to a shortest distance between the interior surface of the pillar and a line passing through said edge of said pillar garnish and substantially parallel to the interior surface of the pillar.

13. A curtain airbag system according to claim 12, wherein a shortest distance between an interior surface of the pillar and any line passing through a center of the guide member along said length and substantially parallel to the interior surface of the pillar is less than or equal to a shortest distance between the interior surface of the pillar and said line passing through said edge of said pillar garnish and substantially parallel to the interior surface of the pillar.

14. A curtain airbag system according to claim 12, wherein said length is substantially equal to a vertical width of a window opening of said automobile adjacent to said pillar.

15. A curtain airbag system according to claim 12, wherein the guide member is a guide rod.

16. A curtain airbag system according to claim 15, wherein the guide rod is substantially straight.

17. A curtain airbag system according to claim 15, wherein the airbag comprises a connecting strap extending from said longitudinal end and connected to the guide rod.

18. A curtain airbag system according to claim 15, wherein the airbag comprises a lower end different from said longitudinal end, and wherein the airbag comprises a connecting strap extending from said lower end of the airbag and connected to the guide rod.

19. A curtain airbag system according to claim 12, further comprising a weather strip mounted to the pillar and overlapping a side of the pillar garnish.

20. A curtain airbag system, comprising:
a pillar having an interior surface and configured to connect a main body of an automobile to a roof of the automobile;
a curtain airbag configured to connect to the automobile and configured to deploy downward along an interior side of the automobile;
a guide member connected to the pillar and configured to guide a longitudinal end of the airbag over the guide member during deployment of the airbag; and
a pillar garnish connected to the pillar and configured to cover the guide member, the pillar garnish having edges,
wherein the longitudinal end of the airbag is movable along the guide member without being bent by any of said edges of the pillar garnish and the interior surface of the pillar during at least a portion of the deployment of the airbag.

21. A curtain airbag system according to claim 20, wherein the longitudinal end of the airbag is movable along the guide member without being bent by any of said edges of the pillar garnish and the interior surface of the pillar throughout the deployment of the airbag.

22. A curtain airbag system according to claim 20, wherein said length is substantially equal to a vertical width of a window opening of said automobile adjacent to said pillar.

23. A curtain airbag system according to claim 20, wherein the guide member is a guide rod.

24. A curtain airbag system according to claim 23, wherein the guide rod is substantially straight.

25. A curtain airbag system according to claim 23, wherein the airbag comprises a connecting strap extending from said longitudinal end of the airbag and connected to the guide rod.

26. A curtain airbag system according to claim 23,
wherein the airbag comprises a lower end different from said longitudinal end, and
wherein the airbag comprises a connecting strap extending from said lower end of the airbag and connected to the guide rod.

27. A curtain airbag system according to claim 20, further comprising a weather strip mounted to the pillar and overlapping a side of the pillar garnish.